

Eminem Fuels Romance Rumors, Fights Acting Jitters On '8 Mile' Set

"I'll never te-ell,' rapper says of relations with co-star Brittany Murphy.

By MTV News Staff

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"[It's] symbolic to my life, but it's not exactly [my life]," said Eminem of his debut feature film, "8 Mile." "Everything that happened in the movie didn't happen in my life, and vice versa."

With "8 Mile" ([\[article id="1454486"\]click for photos\[/article\]](#) from the set), named for the road that loosely separates whites from blacks in Eminem's hometown of Detroit, the controversial MC looks to join the rapper-turned-bankable actor ranks of P. Diddy, Snoop Dogg, DMX, LL Cool J and Will Smith, something his previous film roles — cameos in Dr. Dre's box-office bomb "The Wash" and the equally forgettable "Da Hip-Hop Witch," which also featured Vanilla Ice — might not have indicated.

While Eminem acknowledges that the movie, helmed by Academy Award-nominated director Curtis Hanson ("Wonder Boys," "L.A. Confidential"), is partially based on his own upbringing, he is quick to point out that it's not autobiographical fare.

"I don't play me in the movie," Eminem explained. "I play a guy named Jimmy, whose [background is] similar to how I came up, so it wasn't that hard for me. [I had] to go back to that level of just being a regular person again and remembering how I felt coming up, how it was when I first came to the radio station ... just waiting for just one little chance to like get on, to say something. That's what I had to go back to."

"8 Mile" also stars Brittany Murphy ("Don't Say a Word," "Girl, Interrupted"), Mekhi Phifer ("O," "Carmen: A Hip-Hopera") and Kim Basinger ("9 1/2 Weeks," "Batman"). The movie reunites Basinger with writer/director Hanson, who directed her to an Oscar-winning performance in 1997's "L.A. Confidential."

Hollywood gossip suggested that Eminem enjoyed a "more-than-professional" relationship with Basinger — who plays his mother in the movie — during the film's production. "[That] was completely untrue," Eminem said, emphasizing, "I would not tell a lie."

Em more coyly addressed a similar, equally persistent rumor involving actress Murphy, who plays his love interest in "8 Mile." Mimicking the sing-songy voice she used in last year's "Don't Say a Word," Eminem grinned and said, "I'll never te-ell."

"Me and Brittany became friends," he allowed after being pressed further. "I'll say that."

All offscreen distractions aside, Eminem said that after feeling a bit of apprehension in the beginning, he's confident he pulled off the whole acting thing.

"I've seen most of the movie, and it's better than I thought it was gonna be," Eminem said. "Honestly, the first time I saw the movie trailer, I cringed — like, 'Oh, f---.' I cringed, seeing myself on the big screen. I was mortified.

"It slowly took me a little bit of time, and [I] got over it. Now I was able to see the movie — a rough cut — see it for what it is, and it was better than what I thought it was gonna be."

"8 Mile" is tentatively scheduled for release in November.

—Ryan J. Downey, with additional reporting by [\[article id="1453178"\]Sway Calloway\[/article\]](#)